

EUROPEAN UNION
THE COUNCIL

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(OR. f)

SEMDOC

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NOTE

from : Presidency

dated: 9 February 1995

to : Steering Group 1

Subject: Contribution from Steering Group 1 to the draft report on racism and xenophobia

Preparation of a strategy to forestall the appearance or rise of racist or xenophobic phenomena can clearly be largely negated, at least in its impact, by inadequate control of migratory flows. In difficult economic and social circumstances, the countries of the European Union must be mindful of their obligations both to their own citizens and to third-country nationals lawfully established within their territory. Quite clearly, the delicate balance which has been maintained to date, as well as the check kept on racism and xenophobia, would not withstand a large influx of third-country nationals with no relation to the needs of the economies concerned. Daily life provides ample illustration - should we need reminding - of the dangers which illegal immigration and its inevitable corollary, clandestine labour, can generate, particularly in some difficult urban districts.

It is thus quite obvious that the efforts undertaken, particularly at European Union level in connection with the Third Pillar, to combat illegal immigration, facilitators and clandestine labour ought to contribute significantly to combating racism and xenophobia, as well as to integrating foreigners in a legal situation. It is particularly dangerous to let false correlations be drawn between immigration, delinquency and insecurity. If care is not taken, this type of reasoning can infer unthinking public opinion and can in itself be the catalyzer for an insidious kind of racism or xenophobia. These are serious dangers when everyday life, difficulties in public services, the mechanisms for social support and housing problems demonstrate the fragility of the economic, and even psychological, balance of our societies.

It is thus perfectly legitimate to consider all the various sources of racism and xenophobia and to include among them failure to control migratory flows. Conversely, among them must also be seen the pledge of each EU Member State that it is able to integrate harmoniously foreigners legally admitted to its territory. In this connection the policies of the States of the Union, and their harmonization within the institutions set up by the Maastricht Treaty, should contrive to observe the humanist demands of European tradition. Our duties clearly derive from our recognition of human rights, included moreover in the Union Treaty.

Viewed collectively, however, our duties also coincide with our interests; a firm stand on illegal immigration, together with a policy of integration, must be regarded as one of the major means of fighting racism and xenophobia.

